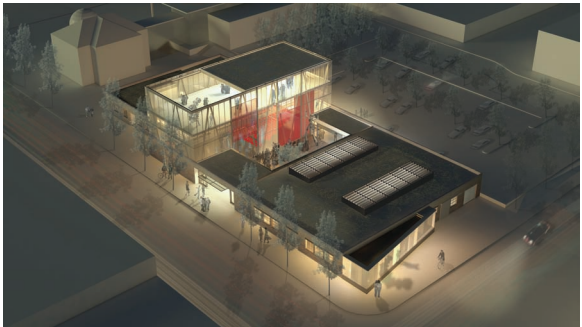


THE WEST ARCHITECTS NEWSPAPER 01_01.26.2011

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COURTESY EMERYVILLE CENTER FOR THE ARTS

EMERYVILLE TAPS LOCAL TALENT FOR NEW ARTS CENTER

Keep it Local

While Bay Area museums like SFMOMA and the Berkeley Art Museum have looked outside the state and even the country to find architects for their recent expansion projects, a new arts organization in Emeryville, a small city sandwiched between Berkeley and Oakland, was determined to find an up-and-coming local firm to design its facility. In

December, after an unusual selection process, the Emeryville Center for the Arts announced that Jensen Architects of San Francisco had won its competition. The new arts venue is adjacent to Emeryville's City Hall and will help establish a stronger civic presence as the city develops its post-industrial identity.

In selecting an architect, the ECA **continued on page 7**

SCULPTURAL DS+R DESIGN WELCOMED AS MAJOR DOWNTOWN LA DRAW



COURTESY DILLER SCOFIDIO + RENFRO

BROAD APPEAL

In fittingly dramatic fashion, on January 6 philanthropists Eli and Edythe Broad unveiled designs for their long-awaited, \$130 million museum on Grand Avenue in downtown Los Angeles. The project, designed by New York architects Diller Scofidio + Renfro (DS + R),

is in parts both boisterous and restrained and has the capacity to help transform a street that has long attempted—and largely failed—to be a vibrant cultural hub for the city. It will be home to the Broads' collection of over 2,000 contemporary **continued on page 8**

CONTENTS

04
GRANDER
HOTEL ON
WILSHIRE

06
SCI-ARC
ALTERS

13
FEATURE:
EARTH-
TECTURE

18
WINE DESIGN

03 EAVESDROP
17 DIARY
21 MARKETPLACE



COURTESY PICA + SULLIVAN

HILTON FOUNDATION FUNDS MORE LA SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

HOME WORK

Despite constant public and private efforts, homelessness remains one of the LA's most intractable issues. According to the Los Angeles Homeless **continued on page 9**

AEG UNVEILS FINALISTS FOR PROPOSED DOWNTOWN LA STADIUM



Rendering of Gensler stadium proposal.

COURTESY GENSLER

Center Field

The LA Rams and the LA Raiders are long gone, and Los Angeles still has no NFL

team. But that hasn't stopped developer AEG from pushing ahead with an elab-

orate effort to lure one, unveiling three plans for a proposed \$1 billion stadium in Downtown LA on December 15.

The three schemes **continued on page 10**

FINAL 2010 BILLINGS JOG UPWARD, SO DOES OPTIMISM

UP IN THE AIR

In the second half of 2010, AIA's Architecture Billings Index was more like a ride at Coney Island than anything currently running at the old amusement park in New York. But at least it's going out on a high note: The November Billings Index, **continued on page 2**

HOUSE OF THE ISSUE:
CRITICAL ANGLES.
SEE PAGE 11



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Robert Thomas
Zen Vuong

CONTRIBUTORS

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HOLD THE ICONS, BUILD A CITY

When Diller Scofidio + Renfro (DS+R) were solicited last June by Eli Broad to sketch an idea for his new archive and museum, the architects were forced to ask: “What do you build next to Disney Hall?” Answer: Something else. Where Frank Gehry’s work is shiny and impenetrable, the Broad Art Foundation, as DS+R have envisioned it, is porous and accessible. The stainless steel concert hall reflects the city’s skyline; blinding sunlight bounces off its capering shell. The Broad’s concrete veil, by contrast, is a less aggressive spectacle. At three-feet thick, and punched through with large angular openings, the new museum looks as if it is cloaked in an ice cube tray twisted by a powerful algorithm. As, certainly, it has been, to pleasing effect.

Over time the animated, if a bit too-tidy white box, with its dramatic, carved out entryway—a nod to DS+R’s earlier Alice Tully Hall—will settle onto Grand Avenue, a signature building poised not so much to duke it out with Disney as to hold its own ground firmly. The trouble here is that everyone—architects, planners, civic officials, and developers—is convinced that if you plant the right number of monuments on Grand Avenue, the street will become, as Eli Broad has said, “the Champs Elysees of Los Angeles.”

No amount of architecture will transform Bunker Hill—the nation’s longest-running redevelopment project or, some would say, longest running scam. Broad’s obsession with having architects strut their stuff has obscured the need for a considered response to the city itself—including varied program and a welcoming streetscape. What we’re looking at now is just a sidewalk lined with masterpieces. This is not to argue for provincial architecture. But it might be helpful if what goes up on Grand Avenue were considered in its rightful place and not as some moon-shot projectile intended to rescue or resuscitate a barren landscape. For starters, the hill itself has been trampled and converted into a three-story garage, as if the slope were actually flat. Why have the architects decided to essentially level a site that drops 200 feet from front to back? An inner truth—not to mention a particular history of human occupancy—resides in this steep hillside, yet the topography is buried. Does this geography communicate no ideas that might be captured in a building and, ultimately, speak to the city at large? And if Los Angeles is truly the center of contemporary art—as Broad and others argued at the unveiling of the museum’s design—why doesn’t the new building reach for a language that breathes the gritty, somewhat toxic perfume that spurs art here?

As it is conceived, the Broad is a pleasant museum with an admirable lobby, an exciting gallery space, and an eye-catching skin, suited to any philanthropist with \$130 million to spare. As usual, Los Angeles gets the architecture of anywhere, leaving us to wonder where our city really is, and who has the guts to confront it.

GREG GOLDIN

UP IN THE AIR continued from front page released on December 22, rose more than three points, reaching the highest mark since December 2007. The month’s score of 52 was up from 48.7 the previous month, that score a slide down from September, when the index climbed over the 50-point mark for the first time since January 2008. (Any score above 50 indicates an increase in billings or inquiries.)

Kermit Baker, AIA chief economist, was heartened, if professionally cautious: “Month-to-month changes can be overblown in terms of understanding what’s going on. I try to see the larger trends. We started the year at 42.5, a steep downturn, and now we are seeing a trend showing continuous swings upward and above 50. We could see another month below 50, but since three of four regional sectors are now modestly above the mark, it’s easier to believe the uptrend is staying with us.”

In November, Baker noted that the South for the first time eked up to 50.5—“joining the club”—while the Northeast led the pack with billings at 51 and the Midwest followed at 50.9. The West, though still below the waterline at 48.7, is heading in the right direction and was up from 44.3 in October.

The breakdown by sector held some surprises. Residential averages rose steeply to 51.1, up two points, but commercial/ industrial dipped down to 49.8, ending a streak above 50 for over six months. “I didn’t see that one coming,” said Baker. While anecdotal evidence suggests that university projects are picking up, the institutional index held pretty steady, a negligible shift to 49.3 from 50.8.

Architects are accustomed to a certain amount of volatility in the field, and riding the professional roller coaster seems to come with the territory. But there is little indication so far that the steep dive of the past two years is going to be offset by a joyride back to over-the-top flush times. Improvements continue at a snail’s pace. According to Baker, that’s good news if it means a new paradigm that is less cyclical overall, but not good news if modest upturns are accompanied by full-force downturns. “The upturn needs to be steep enough to get new jobs going again,” Baker said.

JULIE V. IOVINE

LETTERS

A CHANCE AT BAT

I pick up your newspaper at the state AIA office when I’m in downtown Phoenix. And I read it almost front to back. So, of course, I read the Diller and Scofidio interview (CAN 09_10.27.2010). It brought back some thoughts I had about some major projects that were designed around 1990 in Phoenix. The residents passed a bond election for cultural improvements. It was a pretty hefty sum, something that only the Fed would be able to do now. Most of the new and improved projects went to “big name,” out-of-state architects. A couple went to local architects. One of the buildings by a local has received

international accolades; the others haven’t.

It didn’t surprise me that Diller and Scofidio were selected for the Broad contract in LA. That’s private money, and they get to select whomever they want. But it surprised me that [those commissioning the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive] would go outside the Bay area, or even the Berkeley community, to select a design team.

I’m certainly not promoting provincialism, but I do think that asking local architects to step up to the plate and hit a home run is not an unreasonable attitude for any community. Phoenix is a good example of borrowing styles and

architects from elsewhere, and ending up with a severe lack of identity. But it has been proven that a local architect can hit one out of the park, and I assume there are many Berkeley grads that would have appreciated the opportunity to go to bat.

And there are many more waiting for their chance, if we could just get the priorities straight. I’m just a one-man shop, trying to get my little community to push me to the top of the “On-call List,” when the likes of AECOM and Gensler are chasing the same projects.

MARK LYMER
MARC ARCHITECTURE
TEMPE, ARIZONA

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DRINKING THE KOOL-AID

Just when we thought our favorite California architects were embracing smaller, more site-appropriate homes, we learn that the new house that LA architect **Michael Maltzan** has built for entertainment mogul **Michael Ovitz** measures 28,000 square feet. Yes, 28. Thousand. Not a home, but a Hadrian's villa, complete with its own world-class gallery for Ovitz's art collection. The home, or whatever you want to call it, consists of three cubes descending down a rugged slope in Malibu. When we asked months ago if we could write about it we weren't allowed to get a single pic, due to privacy concerns. Apparently, *W Magazine* didn't pose the same security threat that our little engine that could does. In their gushy profile, called "The Client Whisperer," Maltzan reveals that Ovitz warned him: "This will either be the biggest thing for your career or it will completely destroy you." Maltzan told us, "I kind of liked that." To which we respond: Architects say the darnedest things.

BROKEN RECORD

Remember **Daniel Libeskind's** Robocop-meets-Hepa-Air-Filter design for Figueroa Street in Los Angeles? You know, the one that was abandoned leftovers from an aborted scheme in New Jersey? Well, the bespectacled, cowboy-boot wearing artiste is still trying to pass off those leftovers as a site-specific delicacy. This time, it's Sao Paolo in Brazil that's getting the retooled rehash of intersecting wedges and balconies. Speaking to his special genius for strongly contextual solutions that deeply reflect the special character of each site, Libeskind noted, "that he derived design inspiration for the project from Brazil's natural and urban beauty and from its people who exhibit shared humanity." Isn't that what he says about every city he works in?

THE PARTY IS OVER, OR JUST BEGUN

We've just learned that after 25 years at its helm, the never-shy **Peter Noever** has announced plans to step down as head of Vienna's MAK (Museum of Applied Arts). Among many other achievements, Noever opened the MAK Center at the Schindler House in West Hollywood. According to *The Art Newspaper*, the Austrian Green Party had "submitted an inquiry to parliament this fall following allegations that he had mismanaged resources." Furthermore, the paper reported, Noever has since been offered a job working with former Guggenheim director **Thomas Krens**. Hmmm, two spurned megalomaniac museum directors joining forces? Somebody call Michael Ovitz!

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BENNY CHAN

LA firm Standard has brought its warm modern eye to Laguna Beach, where the designers recently completed a retail store and restaurant for clothing manufacturer Tommy Bahama. The company owners wanted to freshen their look, moving from a kitschy, Hawaiian-shirt-and-pineapple-graphic aesthetic into something, well, more sophisticated. Much of the inspiration, explains Standard principal Silvia Kuhle, comes from local beach houses, and from the vernacular architecture of the Bahamas. Painted white hardwood ceilings and heated hickory floors (which look like teak) provide the residential-themed backdrop, and the firm was asked to "design everything down to the napkins and the forks," explained Kuhle. Large hickory shutters, invoking Caribbean porches, act as displays and allow the retail area to be moved around and opened up. The dining area, which actually serves surprisingly good food, including sashimi and arctic char, is dominated by walnut tables and chairs, and chandeliers created by light bulbs hanging on wires around circular steel hoops. "We didn't know if our cultural taste fit with theirs, but they wanted to push it to what we would like versus what they would like," explained Kuhle.



COURTESY KENNERLY ARCHITECTURE & PLANNING

UNVEILED

200 SIXTH STREET

San Francisco's redevelopment agency continues to invest in modern architecture, last month tapping small firm Kennerly Architecture & Planning to replace a long-time eyesore in the South of Market area. Making a rare use of eminent domain, in 2009 the organization acquired a property at Sixth and Howard, a burnt-out brick building that has been abandoned since the 1980s, and has since been famously festooned with sofas and chairs as part of a popular

art installation called "Defenestration." Replacing it will be a nine-story mixed-use project with 56 units of affordable family housing.

In the concept drawing, a double-height retail space on the corner and a grand lobby with an open stair gives the building its street presence. Saida + Sullivan Design Partners collaborated with Kennerly on the project. In addition to a roof deck, most units along Sixth Street will have balconies off their living rooms. All corridors will be daylit; half will terminate in internal balconies, enabling double-height spaces on the side facing Howard.

Laundry rooms will also be located at these junctions to take advantage of the natural light.

The exterior will feature modern versions of bay windows, which, combined with the balconies, will give it a "juicy richness in terms of shade and materiality," said Kennerly. "It's really important to us to have good architecture—all it takes is one ugly affordable housing building and people will say they don't want those projects in their neighborhood," said Olson Lee, the redevelopment agency's deputy executive director. The agency is also pleased that the design—which breaks up the mass into two volumes, starting taller at the corner and stepping down further along the block—followed guidelines for new development in a historic district (the area is expected to become the "Sixth Street Lodging House District") and should pass muster when it is up for formal review.

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MAJOR SKYSCRAPER PROJECT INCHES FORWARD ON SITE OF WILSHIRE GRAND HOTEL

LA City Council—would be built on the site of the current Wilshire Grand Hotel (to be demolished). This includes a 45-story high rise that houses a luxury hotel and residential units, as well as a 65-story office tower. The two buildings, designed by the firm AC Martin—designer of several notable downtown skyscrapers—will be connected with a large plaza, while their 275,000 square feet of public space will include shops, a spa, and meeting spaces.

The project's final sticking point—when discussed by the planning commission at a seven-hour meeting—is another clue as to why projects drag on in the city. After a protracted push and pull, the commission finally called for the building's LED signage to be reduced to 150 feet or 13 stories, a much smaller area than the developer had requested. The department also nixed the idea of upper floor exterior lighting.

Besides the LED signs, the new buildings will have folded glass facades, tapering inward as their height increases (largely a function of their cores shrinking as fewer elevators travel to the top). While details haven't been finalized, AC Martin principal David Martin said that the hotel would also be clad in a combination of stainless steel and terra cotta, and the office tower would be clad in stainless steel

with photovoltaic-covered sun shades along its south elevation.

The buildings' glass configurations would change according to their orientation, creating what Martin alternately referred to as "textured" and a "fuzzy character." "Different patterns will be created by various angles of the sun," said Martin, noting that the buildings will have operable windows. The podium, meanwhile, will be "open and glassy," welcoming pedestrians instead of presenting monolithic walls.

AC Martin has designed the 52-story Two California Plaza and the 53-story Bank of America Plaza, among many others. Meanwhile, the building's developer, Thomas Properties, has worked on Two California Plaza, the Wells Fargo Tower, Library Tower, and Gas Company Tower. Their partner, Korean Air, owns three hotels in Korea and another in Hawaii. Korean Air acquired the Wilshire Grand Hotel in 1989. That 1950s building was designed by architect Welton Beckett, but LA Conservancy spokesperson Cindy Olnick told *AN* that the building is not a landmark property "because it's been so completely altered over the years, even on the exterior. It was very important when it opened as the Statler Center in 1952, but unfortunately, it has virtually no historical integrity left," she said.

The development team is

The two towers rise to 45 and 65 stories. Left: The 275,000 square foot podium.



COURTESY AC MARTIN

exploring several funding options, although Martin admits that right now there is more demand for hotel construction than office construction. In early January, the developers helped clear their path by announcing a union agreement to give hotel employees of the Wilshire Grand severance and the option to work at the new hotel. The final step in the process comes early this year when the LA City Council casts its vote. **SL**

UPWARD MOBILITY

Despite grand ambitions, Downtown LA has built precious few skyscrapers in recent years. The major culprits are the economic downturn, a bloated bureaucracy, and a short-staffed planning department, all of which help explain why the Wilshire Grand Redevelopment, first proposed in April 2009, took until

December 17 to receive approval from the LA Planning Commission.

Nonetheless, the green light paves the way for one of the largest projects in LA in years. The \$1 billion, 2.5 million-square-foot, mixed-used complex consists of two large towers on the corner of Wilshire and Figueroa that—if approved by the

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CHANGES IN LEADERSHIP AT SCI-ARC, AND A NEW ROBOTICS LAB, T00



The school's new robots will automate fabrication and help students explore new forms and materials.

program (EST), a post-graduate program that emphasizes technologies like digital design, new fabrication methods (including robotic fabrication), and new material and building systems.

"We're trying to figure out what it's about. If it takes starting new programs, then we want to do that," explained Moss.

As part of that program, the school plans to open a new robotics lab—which Moss refers to as the "robot house"—and a robotics simulation room in the coming months. The institution has already received six of the robots that will help automate fabrication, model-making, and other processes. Thanks to a \$300,000 in-kind gift from Staübli Robotics, SCI-Arc will become one of the first architecture programs in the country with such capabilities. The EST program is headed by technology-savvy faculty like Diaz Alonso, Tom Wiscombe, Peter Testa, and others.

The school's tech prowess is also evident in its entry in the U.S. Solar Decathlon competition, which the U.S. Department of Energy has sponsored to find a solar-powered house of the future. That design, called CH:IP, features a giant cantilever, imbedded solar panels, and several sustainable insulation techniques. It will be on display at the National Mall in Washington, D.C. in October.

"It's a really exciting time to be here," said Fung. And, definitely, never complacent. **SL**

Musical Chairs

LA's SCI-Arc, which has shuffled faculty and locations throughout its history, prides itself on its commitment to "a permanent state of change." The school is definitely living up to that promise. As of January, the school officially has a new Undergraduate Chair, John Enright, a new Graduate Chair, Hernan Diaz Alonso, and a completely new post: Academic Affairs Director, which is being filled by Ming Fung, who formerly served as the school's Graduate Chair. Aside from new academic leadership, the school is undergoing several other changes: it recently announced a new technology-focused graduate program; it has a new COO, Jamie Bennett; and, in addition to other new facilities and projects, it's working on a ground-breaking new

robotics lab.

"We're not self-satisfied; we know the discussion moves, and that new voices are needed to move it," said Eric Owen Moss, the school's director since 2002.

The administrative changes, which were announced in the fall and became effective this month, were precipitated by last summer's departure of former undergraduate program chair Chris Genik, who left to become dean of the NewSchool of Architecture + Design in San Diego. While searching for a replacement, the school's directors decided it was time to add the academic affairs position, a combination of dean and provost that Fung said would help lighten the administrative load for everybody, crucial at a school where adminis-

trators also teach.

"It just seemed to make sense to start our programs fresh," said Fung. In essence the school, which espouses a balanced leadership, will now have four people leading it instead of three, said Fung.

"We're using this opportunity to brainstorm ideas for the future," said Diaz Alonso, who, like his colleagues, seems pleased with the direction in which SCI-Arc is headed (The school recently ranked second in the Design and Computer Applications categories in Design Intelligence's annual ratings). For Diaz Alonso, a principal at LA's Xefirotarch as well as a professor at SCI-Arc, a major goal is to improve the school's research and critical discourse.

"We need to try to understand the nature of architecture when the discipline is exposed to a high-speed level of change," he said. Diaz Alonzo also wants to push the

crossover between practice and the school. "It's vital that the school not operate in a vacuum," he said. "We don't want to be an academic institution in a traditional sense."

For Enright, a principal at Griffin Enright Architects and a professor at SCI-Arc since the 1980s (with a short hiatus for a turn as assistant professor at USC) change means pushing the school's focus on digital fabrication further, so that it better integrates with structural and environmental systems. He also hopes to better bridge the separation between fields of study.

"That's the next challenge with education: How do we apply that three-dimensional thinking, which our students are so good at, across disciplines for a more integrated and robust architecture?" said Enright.

As these changes move ahead, the school is also settling into the second semester of its new Emerging Systems and Technology

GALLERY OPENS OUTPOST INSIDE SCHINDLER HOUSE



THE BUCK STOPS ANYWHERE

Architects and preservationists often adhere to dogmatic notions of purity, attempting to restore not just the physical framework of significant buildings but also the soul. In his book *The Secret Lives of Buildings*, historian Edward Hollis bemoaned how "architecture is all too often imagined as if buildings do not—and should not—change."

Since arriving this fall, the new residents of Rudolph Schindler's Buck House in LA's Miracle Mile, Cincinnati-based Country Club Projects, has already subverted these expectations, challenging both the sanctity of mod-

ernist landmarks and the limits of traditional gallery spaces. Eschewing the "white box" model for art space, the gallery is programming its LA outpost with work that creates a dialogue with the building in which it is housed.

Built in 1934, the wood-frame-and-stucco Buck House represents the application of Schindler's theory of "Space Architecture." While most of the architect's projects in LA are sited on steeply angled lots, the Buck House (like his own residence on Kings Road in West Hollywood) is built on a flat lot near the Miracle Mile. The house's

horizontal layout consists of two L-shapes that interlock, with flat roofs of varying height. Clerestory windows wrap around the upper floor, creating the sense that the roof is floating. The overall effect is a building that seems much more expansive than its modest square footage would suggest.

Despite some minor remodeling, the house has remained mostly unchanged over the past seven decades. So Country Club Projects' exhibition last September in the Buck House seemed especially transgressive. Designed by Jonah Freeman and Justin Lowe, the

site-specific installation *Bright White Underground* transformed the spartan interiors into a decaying labyrinth inspired by a fictional character housing an experimental drug safe house. The end result was crumbling walls, festering mold, and peeling wallpaper. According to gallery principal Christian Strike, the mold textures and treatments were a combination of paint, foam, layers of saturated paper and other materials. "It was a violent intervention," he said. The house was returned to its pristine state for its most recent exhibit, featuring the

The gallery's recent show *Bright White Underground* simulated the destruction of the famous home's interior.

politically-tinged work of guerilla poster artist, Robbie Conal.

Kimberli Meyer, director of the MAK Center, which takes residence in a few Schindler houses including the Kings Road residence, is intimately aware of the opportunities and limitations that exhibiting contemporary art in a Schindler building can present.

"It's not easy to maintain the integrity of the house while also giving the art enough room to breathe," said Meyer.

Yet both Meyer and Strike have discovered an unexpected upside to exhibiting art in architecturally significant spaces. "It brings different kinds of people together—those that are interested in architecture and those that are interested in art," said Meyer. Strike hopes to draw on LA's love of indoor/outdoor spaces (of which there are plenty in the sliding doors and large courtyard in the Buck House) to create an atmosphere for socializing. "Seeing art in a house allows you to interact in a way you can't in a gallery," said Strike. "One of our goals is activating the community."

MARISSA GLUCK

JOSHUA WHITE

Jensen Architects designed a glass cube with flexible performance and gallery spaces inserted within an existing brick warehouse. Below: The main "theater with no walls" opens onto an interior courtyard.



KEEP IT LOCAL continued from front page took into account its program for the new visual and performing arts center, which will include salons and master classes as part of every exhibition, and performances to encourage public engagement.

"A big part of our mission is to foster emerging artists and a vibrant arts sensibility, so the architecture competition was developed in order to reflect that, instead of doing a traditional RFP," said Sheila Bergman, ECA's executive director, who previously held that role at UCLA Arts, a professional school for arts and architecture. The ECA board was advised by David Meckel, California College of the Arts director of research and planning, who came up with the idea of inviting local talent that didn't include FAIAs (Fellows of the American Institute of Architects). This meant attracting emerging rather than established firms. In addition to Jensen Architects, the five other architects on the shortlist (narrowed from an initial list of 20) were Aidlin Darling Design, Edmonds + Lee Architects, Envelope A+D,

Ogrydziak/Prillinger Architects, and Schwartz and Architecture. Concepts were presented in a public forum on December 6.

Jensen Architects, led by Mark Jensen, is best known for designing the new sculpture garden on the roof of SFMOMA. In the team's concept drawings, the centerpiece is a steel-framed glass cube that houses the performance space, inserted into the shell of the existing 30,000-square-foot brick warehouse on the site. "The theater is very transparent—you'll be able to see the catwalks above the stage, the rigging, the lights changing—you'll see the inner workings of this art center from the outside," said Jensen.

One of the strengths of the team's presentation, according to ECA's Bergman, was the possibility of multiple theater configurations. Thanks to retractable seating, the space can morph from a conventional stage with about 230 seats to a completely open floor. In the design for a "theater with no walls," as Jensen describes it, the indoor space opens through big hangar doors directly onto a 2,700-square-foot open-air

courtyard carved into the center of the warehouse. Gallery spaces will be located on the other side of the courtyard.

"In general, given that [the center has] such ambitious ideas for programming, we took a swing-shift approach to the spaces, without strict boundaries between them," said Jensen. The team also presented thoughts for a new civic plaza that would connect the museum with City Hall.

"It's part of the revitalization of Emeryville, which has done a great job creating spaces for innovative companies and good housing opportunities. But now there needs to be some effort and investment in building the heart of the community," said Bergman.

The \$12 million project is scheduled for completion in the fall of 2012. The city, which purchased the building in 2006, is currently signed up to provide \$3.5 million; the animation company Pixar, which is in a neighboring building, is contributing another \$2 million; and the center is planning to launch a funding campaign for the remainder.

LL



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THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER JANURAY 26, 2011

The sculptural lobby. Below: the top-floor, column-free gallery space.



COURTESY DS+R

BROAD APPEAL continued from front page artworks, as well as to the offices of the Broad Foundation.

"We're convinced that Grand Avenue is where it's at," said Eli Broad, who has played a significant role in much of the street's distinctive architecture, including Coop Himmelb(l)au's Performing Arts High School, Arata Isozaki's MOCA, and, of course, Disney Hall.

DS + R, well known for its work on Boston's Institute for Contemporary Art and New York's High Line and Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, among other influential projects, has created a design that in many—although not all—ways embraces downtown LA, adding visual energy and welcoming people inside.

The three-story, 120,000-square-foot building is essentially a traditional steel-framed box wrapped in what the firm calls "the veil," an intriguing honeycomb of interconnecting structural concrete trapezoids. At the press conference, DS + R's Elizabeth Diller pointed out that the veil will allow passersby to peek inside the building, while allowing art viewers to peer outside. Diller added that the veil's design originated as a response to the highly expressive Disney Hall, which sits next to the new building. While Disney is shiny and solid, The Broad, as the new museum will be called, will be porous and cellular. She said

sponges and lava stones provided inspiration.

One enters the building through a "lift" of the veil, a large glass-clad cantilever on the corner of Grand Avenue and 2nd Street that's evocative of the entry to DS + R's Alice Tully Hall at Lincoln Center. The opening will "blow a kiss to Disney," joked Diller, and invite people to come into the lobby, a sculptural space that will be activated with a cafe, bookstore, and multimedia space. On the escalator ride up to the main galleries, one will process through a dramatic tunnel that pierces the "vault," an interior space containing the museum's storage and archives. The foundation's offices and a lecture hall will also be contained on these intermediate floors. On the way down, a separate passageway will offer glimpses into the vault and the inner workings of the museum.

The top-floor galleries will contain 40,000 square feet of open, column-free exhibition space that takes advantage of the veil's construction to filter natural light in mesmerizing patterns. DS + R associate Kevin Rice noted that the firm is working with ARUP lighting designer Andy Sedgwick, the same consultant who has worked with Renzo Piano on many of his memorable skylights. Other partners in the project include executive architect Gensler.

Diller believes the building will

add excitement to Grand Avenue and downtown LA, but also tamps down expectations for its impact on the neighborhood. "It's only a step. It will not solve LA's problems," she said. While the building's Grand Avenue and 2nd Avenue facades appear fairly active with their glassy fronts and widened sidewalks, its south and west elevations are still question marks. Those sides will have no public entrance and meet the street via the building's three-story parking garage.

Much depends on whether the city's huge Grand Avenue Project moves forward. That plan calls for plazas around the space, which could better connect the museum to the urban grid as well as to a new transit station. While many seem unsure if the new public space will come to pass, city planner Simon Pastucha said that "it's a requirement, it's just a question of when." When asked about the retail, restaurant, park, and hotel-rich Grand Avenue Project—hyped as the people-drawing complement to the street's institutional heft—Broad told *AN*, "It's delayed, but it's still going."

But until that project is underway, the Broad—with its flashy architecture and \$2 billion collection—remains Grand Avenue's best hope for regeneration.

SL

STEEL AND SHADE

THE ARCHITECTURE OF DONALD WEXLER

January 29 - May 29, 2011

Donald Wexler, *Steel House*, 1962, photography © Juergen Nogai, 2010

Organized by the Palm Springs Art Museum and California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, this exhibition is funded in part by the museum's Architecture & Design Council, CALCRAFT Construction, Mitre & Bevel, Escalante Architects, Helene Galen, Daniel Patrick Giles, Hamptons Modern, Thomas Jakway and Stephen Tripp, Harold Matzner, Brian McGuire, Ph.D., the City of Palm Springs, Modernism Week, Weldon Color Lab, American Institute of Architects/California Desert Chapter, and Friends of Donald Wexler.

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CAL STATE NORTHRIDGE WELCOMES ALL TO NEW PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

VALLEY OF THE ARTS

This month, arts and culture patrons in LA's San Fernando Valley will finally get an alternative to schlepping downtown to find world-class performance. After more than three decades of determined effort, the new Valley Performing Arts Center (VPAC) at California State University Northridge (CSUN) officially opens on January 29.

Designed by Minneapolis-based HGA Architects & Engineers, the 166,000-square-

foot center sits between Nordhoff Street, a major local thoroughfare, and the CSUN campus. The complex comprises two connected buildings wrapped around a central courtyard, which opens toward the school's other art buildings along CSUN's east-west axis.

From the street, the main building's distinctive cantilevered roof and generous glass curtain walls afford clear views inside—a counter-



point to the generally opaque facades on the campus. A minimalist George Rickey kinetic sculpture, once damaged in the Northridge earthquake, and a large reflecting pool facing the street add to the hum of activity. "We wanted an extroverted building," explained lead designer Kara Hill.

The facade's travertine tile and glass continue inside the lobby, where a sweeping staircase lifts one's gaze toward an upper balcony and rooftop terrace. The main building contains the heart of the complex, a 1,700-seat multipurpose performance hall designed with acoustics

flexible enough to support anything from a classical music performance to a movie premiere.

The attached building houses a 178-seat black box theater for experimental and student productions, a 230-seat lecture hall, and rehearsal stages and studios for the campus radio station, KCSN (88.5 FM). This structure borrows much of the vocabulary of the main building, culling from the same neutral-toned palette of materials—painted steel, aluminum, stone, and travertine.

To accommodate the variable acoustical needs without



changing the appearance of the hall, the building deploys multiple techniques. More than 34,000 feet of stainless steel mesh cover the sound-absorptive wool serge fabric on the rear and side walls. Acoustic banners can also be deployed above the hall's catwalk. Sinuous wood ribbons wrapped around the three-tiered hall also act as acoustical baffles that hide light poles and speakers underneath. Rather than using forced air systems that can add to noise, the hall uses a displacement ventilation system with diffusers under patrons' seats.

The \$125-million dollar complex was built using both public and private funds. About \$110 million has either been received or committed: \$80 million from federal, state, and county sources, and \$30 million from individuals, corporations, and foundations, according to an official statement. At the building's press preview, an additional \$18 million was still needed to cap off financing, said LA County Supervisor Michael Antonovich. CSUN plans to close that gap by selling naming rights and holding invitation-only events. **CARREN JAO**

LA NATURAL HISTORY ENLIVENS ITS ENTRANCE TO DRAW NEEDED CROWDS



CO ARCHITECTS

Hope They Show

Last April, the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles unveiled its elaborate North Campus scheme, which will rework its surrounding grounds into a natural learning center made of gardens, plazas, and architectural elements. Last month the same firm working on that project—CO Architects—released designs for a complement to that scheme: a glassy new entryway to the perpetually under-visited museum.

The Otis Booth Pavilion, named for Franklin Otis Booth Jr., whose foundation recently donated \$13 million for the project, will replace the Natural History's unceremonious entrance—a cluttered collection of steps and walls barely visible from the nearest major street,

Exposition Boulevard, with a 60-foot-tall pavilion made of large glass panels, each measuring a minimum of five by 10 feet. It is part of a phased expansion and upgrading envisioned back in 2007.

The open entry is intended to lure new visitors, helping boost the museum's attendance from 600,000 to more than 1 million per year, said museum president Dr. Jane Pisano. "I have every confidence we will get to a million," said Pisano, who noted that since adding its *Age of Mammals* exhibit six months ago, the museum has already boosted attendance by 35 percent. The new entry, which will be accessible via a raised bridge, has been in the works for some time, added

Pisano, but its funding "came sooner than expected."

The centerpiece of the new pavilion—set to open in 2013—will be the skeleton of a 63-foot-long fin whale, which will hang from the ceiling via steel cables. The skeleton, which was recently rehabilitated, has been in the museum's possession since 1926.

"It will act like a beacon that you can see from a car or from the subway," said CO Architects principal Fabian Kremkus, whose firm is thoroughly enmeshed with the museum, working on almost half of the institution's square footage. Their work includes the pavilion, the North Campus plan, a renovation of the 1913 building, staggered renovations on the ground and second floors of the main building, a new parking garage, a new central plant, and a new service yard. "Piece by piece by piece," is the approach as Kremkus describes it.

Outside of the Otis Foundation gift, the museum has raised \$84 million out of \$135 million needed for its expansion and renovation plans, said Pisano. The next piece will be the Dinosaur Hall, opening this July. All this should make a major impact when NHM Next, as the museum calls its building effort, finally comes together.

"We're facing a major street, and it's high time we took advantage of it," said Pisano.

SL

HOME WORK continued from front page

Services Authority, there were over 42,000 homeless people in LA County last year. That was down from previous tallies, but the city still has one of the largest populations in the country.

The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation in December announced that it was significantly stepping up its efforts to change that, offering \$13 million in grants to help house and aid the city's homeless. Prior to this push, the foundation had given about \$20 million in grants and loans over the past six years. The new grants will mean more chances for architects to get involved in providing new and renovated lodgings for the homeless, an area that has already yielded work in a time where there's little to go around.

"LA is ground zero for long-term homelessness," said Bill Pitkin, director of Domestic Programs for the Hilton Foundation, which was created in 1944 and has handed out close to a billion dollars in grants over the years. "If we can do it here, we can do it anywhere," he said. Pitkin stresses that the foundation's efforts are only a "catalyst" to help local organizations get back to work and seek aid, which comes predominantly through public grants and tax incentives. Pitkin notes that Hilton's grants are "just a drop in the bucket" compared to such public funds, but that public dollars have been down because of the economic situation.

The bulk of the Hilton grants—\$9 million—will go to the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH), a community development financial institution that helps banks and governments invest in residences for the homeless. The money will help spur the creation

of 2,500 new permanent supportive housing units in LA County, including dwellings for youth leaving foster care and veterans. CSH also provides zero-interest loans to developers to hire architects and other consultants to evaluate the feasibility of a potential housing site. "Often times, architects are asked to front these costs themselves on the strength that they may get a contract at some point," said Ruth Teague, director of CSH in LA. "This eliminates the risk for architects."

Other supportive housing nonprofits in the LA area receiving money include the national organization Common Ground, Mental Health America, the St. Joseph Center, Skid Row Housing Trust, Step Up on Second, and the Downtown Women's Center. Several of California's top architects have already designed housing or renovated buildings for these organizations: Brooks + Scarpa (formerly Pugh + Scarpa) for Step Up on Second; Michael Maltzan and Koning Eizenberg for Skid Row Housing Trust; and Pica + Sullivan for the Downtown Women's Shelter. That renovation project includes a large rooftop garden, a library, fitness room, spa tubs, and quiet lounge. Interiors were crafted by a group of 40 volunteer designers.

The Hilton Foundation's Pitkin noted that once residents achieve stable living situations, they can more effectively receive mental health, job preparation, and other services. "We really believe permanent supportive housing for the chronically homeless is the key," said Pitkin, "The best way to help people achieve a healthy and fruitful life is to get a home."

SL

THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER JANURAY 26, 2011



CENTER FIELD continued from front page belonged to Gensler, HKS, and HNTB, narrowed down from an initial RFP list of nine. The designs of the three firms all include a 1.7-million-square-foot stadium with a retractable roof, enabling convention events when football is not in town. The winner, according to the developer, will be chosen within the next month. The stadium would be located next to the Staples Center on the site of the LA Convention Center's West Hall, which would be demolished and relocated to a site over Pico Boulevard to the south.

"Stadiums belong in downtown," said Tim Romani, president of Icon

Venue Group, which is working with AEG on project team selection as well as design development and construction management. Not everyone agrees: A competing LA stadium proposal, put forth by LA-based Majestic Realty and designed by architect Dan Meis, is located in the outlying City of Industry suburb. The downtown stadium, on a 15-acre site, would seat 65,000 to 75,000 people. Construction wouldn't begin until a team signs on, but if all goes according to plan, said Romani, the building would begin in late 2012 and the stadium would be ready for the football season of 2015.

The plans are still schematic, but at this point

the most architecturally ambitious belongs to Gensler who, the firm's Sports and Entertainment director Ron Turner was quick to point out, has already designed much of LA Live (including the Ritz Carlton and JW Marriott, where, incidentally, AEG's press conference was held). Gensler's stadium, according to Romani, would feature a lightweight ETFE roof, bulging outward and taking on an oval-shaped sectional profile. HNTB, architects of Invesco Field in Denver and the 49ers' future stadium in Santa Clara, presented a stadium with a horseshoe-shaped plan, its west side largely open. Its PTFE roof would be supported by large

steel trusses arranged in an accordion-like fashion. The HKS scheme featured a cable-supported PTFE roof with large parabolic roof sections oriented so that one could look straight through the building to downtown. Its exterior walls would be clad largely with LED displays. That firm recently designed Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis and the mother of all football fields, the Cowboys Stadium outside Dallas.

The Gensler and HKS schemes would take on North-South orientations, opening up to neighboring LA Live, while the HNTB scheme would have an East-West orientation, allowing for a large plaza to the north.



Left: The HKS plan would be clad with a massive LED wall. **Right:** HNTB's stadium would open up accordion-style.

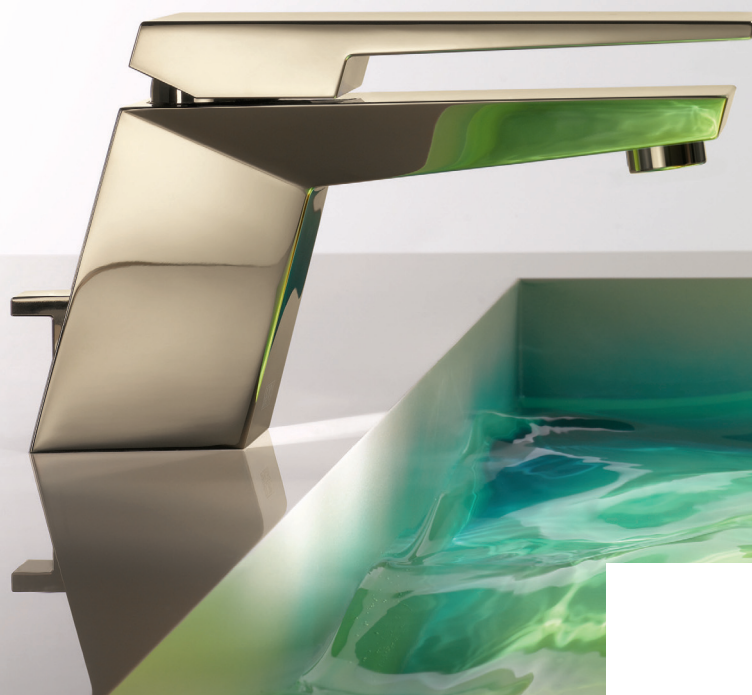
While architectural pizzazz is certainly important, Romani made sure to stress that cost effectiveness would be paramount. "Our calling card is building a stadium for a lot less than people think," he said. His firm has worked on Invesco Field, the O2 Arena in London, and a number of other high-profile arenas. Each stadium scheme contains over 200 luxury suites to help with revenue and maximize floor area for conventions. "This is an opportunity to enhance the convention business and LA," said HNTB's Terry Miller. Another priority is fitting into the tight space downtown. All three schemes have fields sunken 30 to 40 feet into the ground to help the buildings

maintain a minimal profile in the downtown skyline.

Ted Tanner, AEG executive vice president of real estate, said that the project—whose price tag some have questioned in the pricey LA market—would be funded completely by AEG, although when pressed about financing he had no clear answers. To demonstrate the site's feasibility, he said that several hotels were already interested in moving to the area. Meanwhile, now that the developers have begun the lengthy design process, they can begin the real job: getting a team like the Rams to move back.

SL

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Not everyone knows that architecture critic Joseph Giovanni is also a trained architect. Now he has applied those talents on a large scale, building his first major architectural project: a multi-family apartment building in LA's Lincoln Heights.

The project is an adaptive reuse of a 1937 telephone truck warehouse, whose "heroic bay trusses" and loosely art deco exterior looked to the descriptive Giovanni like "a squashed Gothic

Cathedral": "I saw it and I got goose bumps," he said.

The building's 15 double-height apartments, separated by a central aisle, both react to and preserve the building's skeleton. Giovanni, who is an ardent fan of modern art, was especially interested in "curves, ribbons, shards, and floating spaces." In essence, he said, the apartments aim to be three-dimensional art, and in many cases their formal elements are designed as "space paint-

ings," with various colors and shapes recreating two-dimensional techniques in three dimensions.

Inside a rather boxy confine, each unit's curves and shards—further enhanced by strategic backlighting—are created out of sheet rock. "I'm very anti-box. I find it very confining," said Giovanni, who also elected to leave exposed the building's mechanical systems, its magnificent trusses, and its industrial sash windows, drawing attention to the building's industrial

texture and enlarging the overall spaces. It doesn't hurt that his contractor was also trained as an engineer, able to negotiate the unusual dimensions of these spaces.

Because the trusses are too large to accommodate full second floors, each unit has a mezzanine, generally containing the bedroom spaces, with living spaces below. The balconies and stairs are where Giovanni was able to really explore his space painting and love of swoop-

ing curves. Furthermore, each unit, explains Giovanni, reacts to the volume created before it, and no two units are the same. Not even close.

"What you see acts on your body and creates a thrill or dislocation," said Giovanni, who used Vectorworks to visualize each unit before construction. Inspirations for color and shape came from painters like Malevich, Matisse, Ellsworth Kelly, and Yves Klein. Indeed, walking inside some units

Giovanni's "anti-box" aesthetic is evident in each one of the building's 15 apartments where no two are alike; the staircases and dramatic original trusses all become canvases for continually new expression.

can be both thrilling and somewhat disorienting, but never boring. The units, which only cost about \$90 per square foot to build, have rented so well that the author/architect is now looking for his next project. **SL**

THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER JANURAY 26, 2011

PERMANENT CHANGE PLASTICS IN ARCHITECTURE AND ENGINEERING

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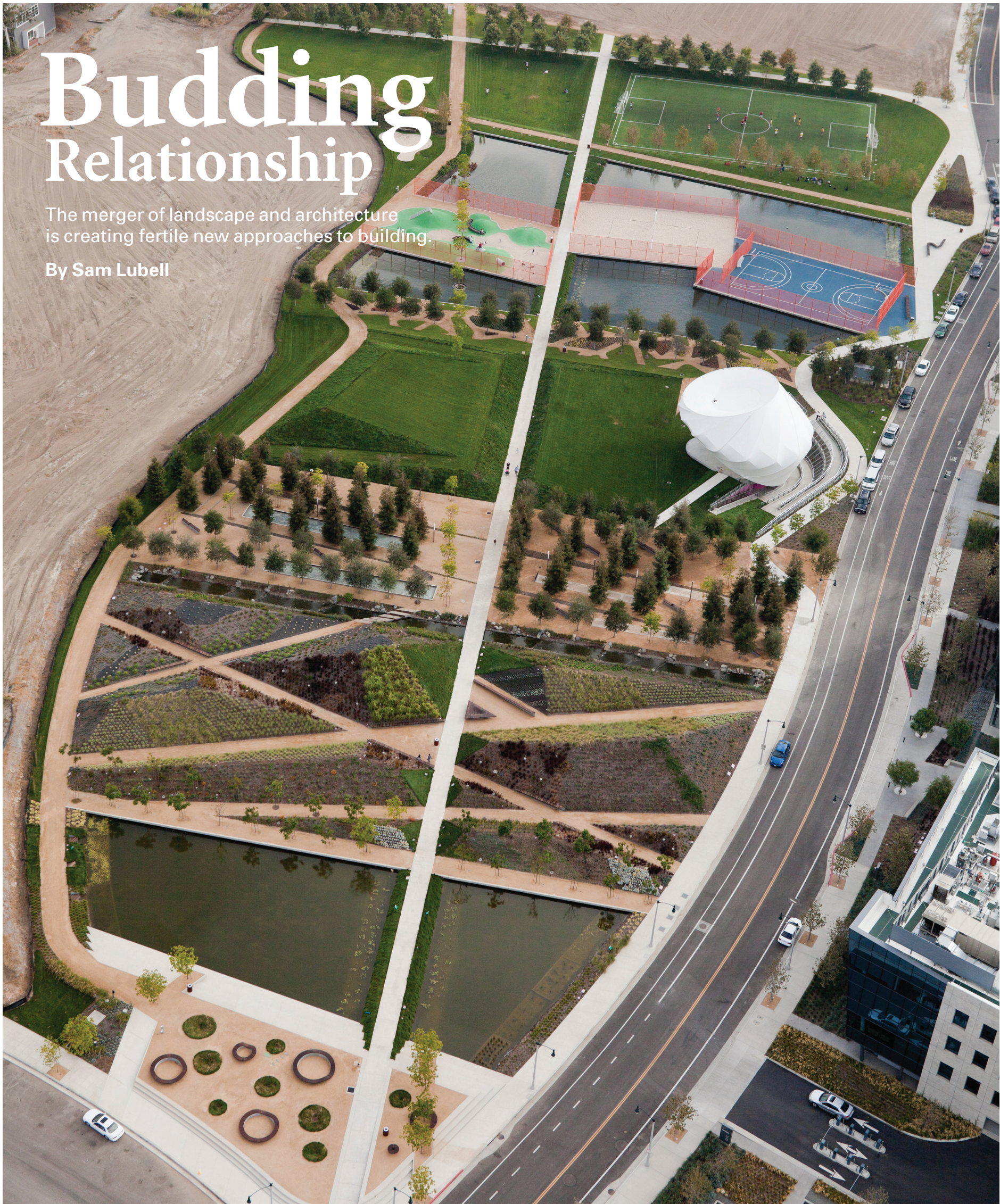
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Collaborate. Innovate. Inspire.

Budding Relationship

The merger of landscape and architecture is creating fertile new approaches to building.

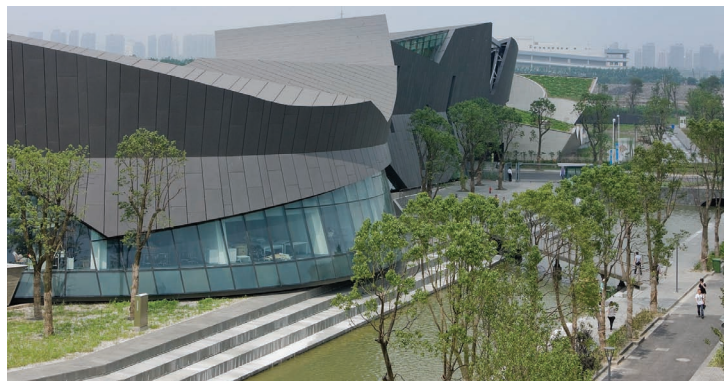
By Sam Lubell





Previous Page:
Michael Maltzan and James Burnett used architectural forms to organize and enliven Playa Vista Park.

Above and right:
Morphosis and SWA coordinated to make Giant Interactive Group's greenscape merge seamlessly with the angular building.



IWAN BAAH

In case you didn't notice, the architecture world is embracing all things green with an enthusiasm not seen since the 1970s. But this time around, the movement has expanded far beyond the grass-roots level to a broader merging of architecture and landscape. This soil-meets-steel trend, precipitated largely by our limited space resources, by the crossover in design fields, and by our desire to return to our roots, has forced architects and landscape architects to collaborate more closely, and occasionally, even to reverse roles.

"The boundary between landscape and architecture barely exists anymore," said architect Michael Maltzan, who this summer opened the Playa Vista park on LA's West Side, a composition broken up into a series of "urban rooms," as the architect calls them, including floating recreation areas, large angular planted mounds, carved granite bridges, and a tensile fabric band shell. Combining valuable techniques learned from landscape architect James Burnett with his own architectural expertise, Maltzan used materials to reinforce the

separation of space and employed shapes and textures to lead people through the park. In the end, the park is as much architecture as it is landscape.

"The concerns and investigations are the same," said Maltzan. "If you remove the traditional distinctions between what disciplines are supposed to be doing and imagine what needs to be done, then you can create real innovation," he added. Several of Maltzan's upcoming projects merge architecture and the land, including the Cornfields Park in LA, the Piggyback

Yard near the LA River, and the Art Park, next to the Geffen Contemporary in Downtown LA.

And Maltzan's work is no aberration. Building green and stretching creative boundaries are just two reasons that "earth-itecture" is taking off. As we run out of buildable land, and as our sprawling lifestyle stretches our resources, it seems inevitable that we must learn how to better overlap architecture and green space in smart ways.

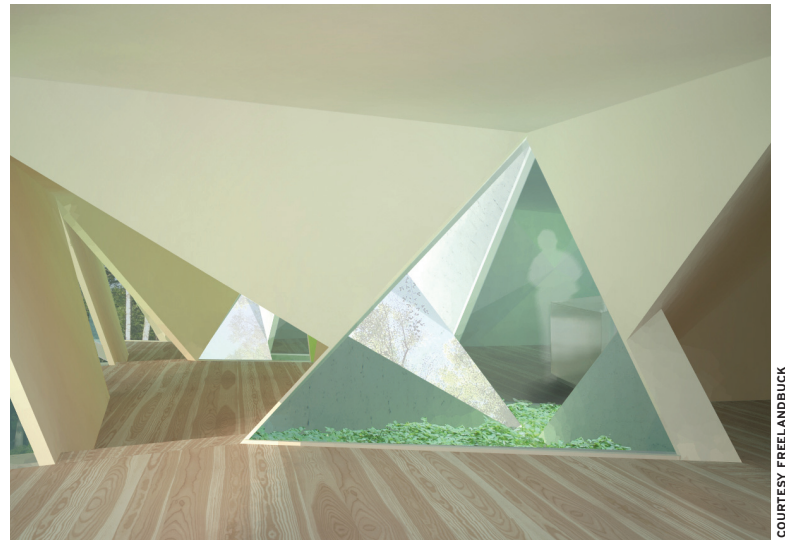
"It's about adding public space in a tight environment," said Curtis Fentress, whose firm is designing

the San Diego convention center expansion, which will provide five acres of green park space on top of the convention center's roof. Such projects are more than standard green roofs, which often overflow with plants but are not intended for people as with Renzo Piano's instantly iconic green roof on top of the California Academy of Sciences.

In more extreme examples, the difference between architecture and landscape is almost impossible to discern. One struggles to tell landscape and structure apart when looking at Hagy Belzberg's Museum



COURTESY BELZBERG ARCHITECTS



COURTESY FREELANDBUCK



COURTESY INTERSTICE ARCHITECTS

Clockwise from left:
Belzberg Architects' hill-like
Museum of the Holocaust in
Los Angeles; the plant-surrounded
interior of Freeland Buck's Hunters
Stand Cabin in Maine; Interstice
Architects' Center For Science and
Innovation at the University of San
Francisco.

of the Holocaust in LA's Pan Pacific Park. Here, sharp, undulating, planted forms are built into the park's existing sloped hillside. In this case, building underground had the added ability to create a powerful architectural experience inside counterbalanced by a lighter experience outside.

Another project in which landscape and building are often indistinguishable is Morphosis' and SWA's new headquarters for Giant Interactive Group outside Shanghai, which is completely covered in green; a "prairie blend"

of 15 plants that undulates and twists at extreme angles, and slopes down to the surrounding water-scape. While all green roofs provide thermal protection, this project is an entire eco-system, filtering water for the nearby canal and feeding several life forms. The green space has become an attraction for workers and locals alike.

"We're all interested in the same things these days," said SWA principal Ying Yu Hung. "Energy efficiency, natural materials, the healing power of nature." Of course, making landscapes fit into the

schemes of an adventurous architecture firm was often challenging. In some places, the building slopes as much as 53 degrees, forcing the firm to come up with inventive measures to keep the soil clinging to the surface. "We were like, 'Are you sure?'" said Hung.

Hung's LA office has two architects to complement its 13 landscape architects, an increasingly common admixture. With "earth-itecture" becoming so common, it makes sense for an architecture firm to have landscape expertise on board. San Francisco firm Interstice

Architects' principles are Andrew Dunbar, an architect, and Zoe Astrakhan, a licensed landscape architect who studied landscape architecture at the University of Pennsylvania. Several of their projects combine the disciplines, including the upcoming Center For Science and Innovation at the University of San Francisco. That project includes a new green plaza made of native plants built on top of an expansion to the school's Harney Hall. In order to provide more light inside, the firm included benches that double as skylights

and a side-facing "storefront window wall" that cuts into the earth. They worked to constantly communicate with the architects, NBBJ, and the project engineers to make sure that "all the players were in the room and decisions were not relegated to one discipline," said Astrakhan. That meant that meetings addressed storm water, mechanical decisions, interfaces, ventilation ducts, and so on. "It was a constant give and take," added Astrakhan. "When you begin documenting things, the lines are difficult to draw. There was definitely



COURTESY FENTRESS ARCHITECTS



NIC LEHOUX



Above and top:
Fentress Architects' San Diego Convention Center Expansion includes a sloping five-acre green space on its roof that will serve as a major recreational area.

Left:
LMN's Vancouver Convention Center roof is a natural habitat for several species. It measures six acres, making it the largest green roof in Canada.

a lot of time spent figuring out what made sense; figuring out what was architecture and what was landscape. It wasn't always that clear to us."

Small LA firm Freeland Buck includes an architect, David Freeland, and a landscape architect, Brennan Buck, who studied landscape architecture at Cornell. Their proposed Hunters Stand Cabin in Maine wedges itself into a hillside, lifting out of the ground plane, clad with shingled wood planks and cut with sharp windows. The earth has proven an inspiration for the firm in several ways: the bottom of the

house is fitted with a soil medium so plants and trees can grow in the middle of the house; the coloring of the rooms change in response to the changing landscape; and triangulated spaces are carved out of the earth to maximize light and landscape interaction. Floors are partially above grade and partially below, emphasizing this divide, and giving the house an "embedded quality," explained Freeland. A thin green roof on top gives the building a feeling of "immateriality," adds Freeland. "Landscape gives you a variety of readings and experiences

and feelings. That's why it's interesting to us," he said.

Of course, the ways that landscape is being incorporated into architecture are not all new. San Diego architect Kevin Defreitas recently completed the St. Bartholomew Chapel, a Catholic church on the Rincon Indian reservation outside of San Diego. The rammed earth project incorporated 120 tons of local soil to form the building's walls, and also used natural elements like a Live Oak Tree, which was harvested for the altar, and a three-ton boulder which was turned into

the building's baptismal font.

In this case, the use of natural materials—the rammed earth walls are several feet thick—help prevent the building from burning down in a wildfire, as its predecessor did a few years ago. And its incorporation of local materials was vital for the Indian tribe, which considers land on its reservation sacrosanct. Defreitas found working with the local soil a transformative experience, and hopes to continue, despite San Diego's insistence on not classifying rammed earth as a usable building material. "It's just

dirt, but it's an incredible material," said Defreitas. "It's hard to go wrong with natural materials. They seem to age in a way that others don't. And there's an honesty to the material; you immediately understand what it is. It's as renewable as you can get, and when the building is done, it can go back to where it came from. It's like they say: when God created Adam, he made him out of mud." For some, the back-to-roots movement can be quite literal.

SAM LUBELL IS THE WEST COAST EDITOR OF THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER.

JANUARY

WEDNESDAY 26

LECTURES

Christian Moeller:
Tangible Cartoons
7:00 p.m.
Southern California Institute of Architecture
W. M. Keck Lecture Hall
960 East 3rd St.
Los Angeles
www.sciarc.edu

Decolonizing Architecture:
Panel Discussion
7:30 p.m.
REDCAT @ Roy and Edna
Disney/CalArts Theater
631 West 2nd St.
Los Angeles
www.redcat.org

Michael Weinstock:
Metabolism of the City
6:00 p.m.
USC School of Architecture
Gin D. Wong, FAIA
Conference Center,
Harris Hall 101
Los Angeles
arch.usc.edu

THURSDAY 27

LECTURES

Nip Tuck Diptych:
a Lecture on Architecture
by Sharon Johnston and
Nader Tehrani
7:30 p.m.
MOCA LA
250 South Grand Avenue
Los Angeles
www.aialosangeles.org

MOCA Art Talk:
Sharon Kanach
Discusses Iannis Xenakis
6:30 p.m.
MOCA Pacific Design Center
8687 Melrose Ave.
West Hollywood
www.moca.org

SYMPOSIUM
Historic District
Designations in an
Urban Environment
9:00 a.m.
The Hillside Club
2286 Cedar Street
Berkeley
californiapreservation.org

SATURDAY 29
LECTURE
Art, Architecture and
California Culture:
The Works of Kenton Nelson
1:00 p.m.
Art Center College of Design,
Ahmanson Auditorium
1700 Lida St.
Pasadena
www.aialosangeles.org

EXHIBITION OPENING
Imagine That! Photographing
an Invisible World
California Museum of
Photography
3824 Main St.
Riverside, CA
www.cmp.ucr.edu

SYMPOSIUM
California 2020,
A Vision for the
Next Decade
9:00 a.m.
Sheraton Grand
1230 J St.
Sacramento, CA
www.pcl.org

FEBRUARY

TUESDAY 1

LECTURE

Next Up for Pier 70:
Rehabilitating Historic
Waterfront Buildings
12:30 p.m.
SPUR
654 Mission St.
San Francisco
www.spur.org

WEDNESDAY 2

LECTURES

Hernan Diaz Alonso:
The Forms of Plenty
7:00 p.m.
Southern California Institute of Architecture
W. M. Keck Lecture Hall
960 East 3rd St.
Los Angeles
www.sciarc.edu

At the Border of City
and Sea: New Public
Landscapes for Coastal Cities
12:30 p.m.
SPUR
654 Mission St.
San Francisco
www.spur.org

Jenny Wu: Cumulative
Processes/Intimate
Understandings
6:00 p.m.
USC School of Architecture
Gin D. Wong, FAIA
Conference Center,
Harris Hall 101
Los Angeles
arch.usc.edu

THURSDAY 3

LECTURES

Tanya Zimbardo on Bill
Fontana's Sonic Shadows
6:30 p.m.
SFMOMA
151 Third St.
San Francisco
www.sfmoma.org

UCSD By Design:
Robert Storr
7:00 p.m.
MCASD La Jolla
700 Prospect St.
La Jolla, CA
www.mcasd.org

SATURDAY 5
EXHIBITION OPENING
Connie Samaras:
After the American Century
California Museum of
Photography
3824 Main St.
Riverside, CA
www.cmp.ucr.edu

Mexico:
Expected/Unexpected
MCASD La Jolla
700 Prospect St.
La Jolla
www.mcasd.or

Streetwise:
Masters of 60s
Photography
Museum of
Photographic Arts
1649 El Prado
San Diego
www.mopa.org

The Eye of Bamako
M+B
612 North Almont Drive
Los Angeles
www.mbart.com

MONDAY 5

SYMPOSIUM

HUD Environmental
Review Training
10:00 a.m.
HUD
3rd Floor Conference Room,
600 Harrison St.
San Francisco

MONDAY 7

LECTURE

François Roche, R&Sie(n)
6:00 p.m.
UCLA, Perloff Hall
100 Stein Plaza
Los Angeles
www.aud.ucla.edu

TUESDAY 8

LECTURES

Public Health and Rural
Community Planning -
How Close a Connection?
12:00 p.m.
Humboldt County Public
Health Office
908 7th St., Eureka, CA

Connecting Regional
Open Spaces:
Trails Forever at the GGNRA
12:30 p.m.
SPUR
654 Mission St., San Francisco
www.spur.org

New Urban Development:
Looking Back to
See Forward
6:00 p.m.
SPUR
654 Mission St.
San Francisco
www.spur.org

WEDNESDAY 9

LECTURES

Benedetta Tagliabue:
Recent Work
7:00 p.m.
Southern California Institute of Architecture
W. M. Keck Lecture Hall
960 East 3rd St.
Los Angeles
www.sciarc.edu

Lorcan O'Herlihy:
STRICT/LOOSE
6:00 p.m.
USC School of Architecture
Gin D. Wong, FAIA
Conference Center,
Harris Hall 101
Los Angeles
arch.usc.edu

THURSDAY 10

LECTURE

Jennifer Dunlop Fletcher on
Tom Price's Meltdown Chairs
6:30 p.m.
SFMOMA
151 Third St., San Francisco
www.sfmoma.org

SATURDAY 12

LECTURES

Clothing Across Cultures
9:00 a.m.
LACMA, Brown Auditorium
5905 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles

The Amazing Neutras in
Orange County
2:00 p.m.
The Old Orange County
Courthouse
211 West Santa Ana Blvd.
Santa Ana, CA
www.ocparks.com/
oldcourthouse

EXHIBITION OPENINGS

SOUPERgreen
6:00 p.m.
Architecture and Design
Museum
6032 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles
aplusd.org

Going Nowhere
Steve Turner Contemporary
6026 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles
www.steveturner
contemporary.com

SUNDAY 13

EXHIBITION OPENING

Larry Fink:
Hollywood, 2000-2009
Los Angeles County
Museum of Art
5905 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles
www.lacma.org

SUNDAY 16

LECTURES

Paolo Cascone:
Eco Logic
Design-Towards High-Tech
Design, Low-Tech
Construction
7:00 p.m.
Southern California Institute of Architecture
W. M. Keck Lecture Hall
960 East 3rd St., Los Angeles
www.sciarc.edu

Dancing in the Streets:
Celebrating Community and
Public Space
12:30 p.m.
SPUR
654 Mission St.
San Francisco
www.spur.org

TUESDAY 18

EVENT

Gallery Exhibition Discussion:
Patrick Tighe +
Eric Owen Moss
7:00 p.m.
Southern California Institute of Architecture
W. M. Keck Lecture Hall
960 East 3rd St.
Los Angeles
www.sciarc.edu

LECTURE

Hub Bay Area:
Innovations in energy
6:00 p.m.
SPUR
654 Mission St.
San Francisco
www.spur.org

MONDAY 21

LECTURE

CCA Architecture Lecture
Series: Marc Fornes,
THEVERYMANY
7:00 p.m.
California College of the Arts,
Timken Lecture Hall
1111 8th St., San Francisco
www.cca.edu

SUNDAY 23

SYMPOSIUM

Polytopes, The Architecture
of Soundscapes: A
MediaSCAPES symposium
7:00 p.m.
Southern California Institute of Architecture
W. M. Keck Lecture Hall
960 East 3rd St.
Los Angeles
www.sciarc.edu



COURTESY OF JENNIFER STEINKAMP

JENNIFER STEINKAMP
MADAME CURIE

Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego Downtown
1100 & 1001 Kettner Boulevard
San Diego
Through June 26

Jennifer Steinkamp's video installations blend natural imagery with perceptions of time and architectural space to create mesmerizing environments that have helped push new media into mainstream contemporary art awareness. Her latest piece, *Madame Curie*, above, will be on view at the Joan and Irwin Jacobs Building, the downtown location of the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, through June 26. The installation, "an enveloping panoramic work reminiscent of Steinkamp's 2004 video projection *The Wreck of the Dumaru*," was inspired by the artist's recent research into atomic energy and specifically, the life and work of two-time Nobel Prize winner Marie Curie. While Curie is famous for discovering the theory of radioactivity and the elements Radium and Polonium, she was also a dedicated gardener. For this piece, Steinkamp drew from a list of over 40 plants mentioned in Curie's biography "to activate a field of moving flowers and flowering trees." The installation, similar to her 2010 work *Orbit Without Seasons*, will incorporate seven synchronized projections on three walls of a 4,500-square-foot gallery. The exhibition is close to home for Steinkamp, who lives and works in California and is a professor in the Design Media Arts department at UCLA.



COURTESY WILLIAM A. GARNETT

DEVELOPED AND UNDEVELOPED:
PHOTOGRAPHIC LANDSCAPES

de Young Fine Arts Museum
50 Hagiwara Tea Garden Drive
San Francisco
Through March 20

Landscape photography has long played an influential role in America's collective memory. Whether promoting conservation, expansion, identity, or merely documenting the sublime, photographers have been consistently drawn to America's varied vistas. *Developed and Undeveloped: Photographic Landscapes*, a new exhibition at San Francisco's de Young Fine Arts Museum, on view through March 20, brings together over 35 photographs extending back to the 19th century. The collection "presents a variety of approaches to framing the landscape, with scenes of unspoiled wilderness contrasted with sites bearing evidence of human intervention." Including Ansel Adam's elegant vistas, Edward Burtynsky's slashed quarries, and William A. Garnett's unique scenery (above, *Two Trees on Hill with Shadows, Paso Robles* (1974)), *Developed and Undeveloped*, draws from the collections of the Achenbach Foundation for Graphic Arts, the Paul Sack Trust, and Charles and Diane Frankel. Also included are photographs by Mathew Brady, Carleton Watkins, Robert Adams, Shi Guorui, and Michael Light.

GRAPE CULTURE MEETS ARCHITECTURE

How Wine Became Modern: Design + Wine 1976 to Now
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
151 Third Street, San Francisco
Through April 17



NICO BUJEDO / YSIOS WINERY

Whatever your taste in wine, from Sutter's White Zinfandel to Opus One, you'll find plenty to savor in a provocative exhibition at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. The show *How Wine Became Modern* explains, among other things, the frenzy of vintners to brand themselves in a fiercely competitive market, enlisting architects and other designers to help them upstage the competition. Henry Urbach, the museum's curator of architecture and design, has assembled an extraordinary mix of architec-

tural models, art works, videos, glasses, flasks, and other items that bring the subject to life, and in some cases even allow you to sniff (but not taste) the wine.

The architectural product of vintners' quest for notoriety ranges from the sublime to the god-awful. In Napa Valley you can find Herzog & de Meuron's magisterial Dominus winery, the Disneyesque Castello di Amorosa, and Dariush, a meticulous reconstruction of Persepolis with steel-framed windows, where decent wine can be tasted

in a room only an ancient Persian could love. And, of course, there is Michael Graves' Clos Pegase, a post-modern folly that won a misguided SFMOMA competition in 1984. It's a pity that Urbach should hail this as a pacesetter, and ignore the superior wineries of Mondavi and Chappellet that predate it.

Photos of recently built wineries are keyed to a wall map of the world to illustrate the global obsession with striking architecture. Spain tops the list for quality, and alongside the celebrated

structures of Gehry, Hadid, and Calatrava is a little-known gem, Bodegas Baigorri, by the Basque firm of Inaki Asquiarzu. Visitors can admire the hilltop view from an austere glass pavilion, then take a subterranean ramp six levels down, following the gravity-impelled progression of the grape from fruit to bottle. At the bottom of the hill is a restaurant and tasting room. It's a brilliant fusion of architecture and nature, showmanship and productivity, and it demonstrates how architects have transformed the process

as well as the public perception of winemaking.

The show takes a daring look at the artistic side of such endeavors, and even attempts to create its own artwork. Diller Scofidio + Renfro have made an installation for the show that leads with a photo mural of a wine tasting staged as *The Last Supper*, and continues with an eye-opening array of designer wine labels. In one vitrine you'll discover *Wine Wars*, "a trivia game for wine geeks and wannabes," and *Froglets*, a trio of sealed goblets of red, white, and rosé vin

Santiago Calatrava's Ysios Winery, in Spain's Rioja region.

ordinaire. This being a contemporary art museum, you can expect some pretentious absurdity, and the prize goes to a video of a man carrying a full glass of Claret through the streets of Bordeaux, spilling most of it over his white suit. Or you might prefer to inhale the breath of an artist who drank a high-rated bottle and encapsulated the odor into paint.

**LA ARCHITECTURE CRITIC
MICHAEL WEBB WRITES
FREQUENTLY FOR AN.**

URBAN MYTHS VERSUS URBAN REALITIES

Makeshift Metropolis: Ideas About Cities
Witold Rybczynski
Scribner, \$24.00

Witold Rybczynski is an insider the way many critics and historians are not. He was trained as an architect, worked with Moshe Safdie, and has designed buildings on

his own. Before becoming a professor in urbanism he taught design, specializing in low-cost housing for third world countries. One common thread that runs through

his writing is a deep concern for the human qualities of space and place at all scales. While he never lost the eye of an architect, he has broadened his perspective as a critic to become a disciplined, astute historian of the built environment.

This background makes his latest book, *Makeshift Metropolis: Ideas About Cities* a uniquely exciting distillation and critique of some of the most relevant and significant thinking on urbanism in the United States. While acutely

aware of the realities of cities—how they are designed, planned, and developed piece by piece—he can also insert his own understanding as a designer. Thus, he is uniquely positioned to present a balanced view of the "what is" with the "what should be."

Makeshift Metropolis can be viewed as a companion and extension of *A Clearing in the Distance*, Rybczynski's examination of Manhattan and Frederic Law Olmsted. Both books address the complex aggregations that

build cities. And, in similar fashion to *A Clearing*, *Makeshift Metropolis* marks a move away from the author's stories of intimate scales in books like *Home*, *The Most Beautiful House in the World*, *Looking Around*, and *The Perfect House*. Rybczynski is still able to convey the same degree of personal engagement and feeling that characterize these other works.

Makeshift Metropolis provides a sweeping assessment of the most important city planning doctrines and

debates of the 20th and 21st centuries. Rybczynski focuses on three dominant theories: the City Beautiful, the Garden City, and the Radiant City. He demonstrates how these ideas have continued to inform debates on urban planning and design up to the present. One of his conclusions is that Frank Lloyd Wright was a prophetic genius for envisioning the endless outward spread of cities into sprawling suburbs. Though this is not necessarily what we want or need, this is the



DESIGNING UNDER THE INFLUENCE

*L.A. Under the Influence:
The Hidden Logic of Urban Property*
Roger Sherman
University of Minnesota Press, \$34.95

Site planning, zoning, and codes are vital parts of the practitioner's art, but they often remain a series of prescriptions, not inspirations. Conversely, designers frequently cite context to justify a project's form. Site planning and context rarely commingle as meaningful design generators, but Los Angeles architect and professor Roger Sherman shows in *L.A. Under the Influence* that they are integrally intertwined and can produce interesting results and relations.

Assuming the role of detec-

tive, Sherman explores architectural and urban anomalies in his hometown of LA to reveal how various factors and stakeholders shape built environments, sometimes antagonistically, sometimes symbiotically. The best of these result in mutual advantage, a term that Sherman illustrates with a property at 2743 Eighth Street in LA. The landlord provides an apartment and space for a billboard, which inadvertently provides the tenant with a balcony, shading, and a second means of egress.

Sherman argues that in reading sites not only as physical entities but also as properties with hidden relations, one can connect disparate properties and reveal political, economic, and cultural continuities at play. The most obvious are multiple tenants in a mixed-use building or multiple constituencies on a single property, such as an advertisement, parking lot, and building. However, Sherman's case studies show these relations can produce much more interesting results as different uses accumulate



Far left: South La Cienega Boulevard, Los Angeles. View from northbound sidewalk. Left: Close up of covered oil derrick on LA's West Olympic Boulevard

and influence each other.

In his investigations, Sherman criticizes the "purely compositional gamesmanship" and "purely formal reading[s] of urban context," promoted by the likes of Robert Venturi and Colin Rowe, as shortsighted and lacking attention to interaction "enacted through the medium of property," where multiple interests and conflicts are resolved. Sherman's examples are often palimpsests, or have disjointed appearances resulting from subsequent interests and motives merging on a given property. These anomalies pique his curiosity, because these varying intentions form the urban realm and give it character. From studying this evidence, architects and planners can begin to "develop a theory and method of creating" rich urban land-

scapes and developments.

Game theory provides a prime tool in navigating and negotiating the dynamic relations and legalities surrounding properties. More importantly, it involves negotiation, a process that more designers should heed in "bargaining...for a new method of producing urban form." Sherman provides an entire chapter on the logic and forms of negotiation—from "landplay," a kind of mutual haggling, to "even-up," where stakeholders pursue a mutual balance, as opposed to the "tit-for-tat," where parties cooperate until crossed and blatant self-interest, or even vengeance, rules. Almost all forms of negotiation are visible in the 2600 Cherry Avenue property, where a bank, shoeshine, café, and oil pump jack coin-

cide. Neighbors symbiotically share clients and services, and the seemingly detrimental eyesore of an industrial pump provides a landmark and icon.

Adept at telling readers what he is going to say, then summarizing what he told us, Sherman's text is a bit redundant, and decidedly didactic. A practitioner and academic who teaches at UCLA, Sherman avoids delivering a dry, purely pragmatic tome of site and urban planning. Rather, he provides a well-rounded primer with sound examples and theoretical references. Quotes from Georg Simmel and Jane Jacobs to Rem Koolhaas and Edward Soja provide a light academic grounding; and, to illustrate his argument, *L.A. Under the Influence* contains many photos, drawings and diagrams (employing goofy icons that require a key).

Sherman hopes that these close readings of property, strategic negotiations, and collaboration will politicize architecture to reengage urbanism with an adaptive approach, rather than mere formal imposition, where architecture's intentions are clearly communicated. By tracking behaviors of the city, developing new descriptive techniques, and employing new analytic tools that embrace the complexities of property and negotiations, he contends that designers and planners will "reclaim a more instrumental role in the making of cities." His may not be the only method, but *L.A. Under the Influence* certainly reads as a good start. In the end, it's up to the reader to figure out how to implement the lessons.

JAMES WAY IS EDITOR OF THE FXFOWLE BLOG.

way things are. Understanding that fact is a crucial foundation for determining future strategies.

These concepts are juxtaposed with the specter of Jane Jacobs' influential book, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. Jacobs' model of the city guided by its own crazy logic has come to pass, albeit in unexpected ways. Therefore, the metropolis, as Rybczynski defines it, has become "an unplanned, almost anarchic arena for individual enterprise."

While the book is focused on the American experience, it also serves as an interesting framework from which to view cities in the developing world. It is easy to forget that our presumably advanced and well-regulated cities here in the West are possibly more Jacobsian than they appear and that the new cities of the "East" are developing along similar trajectories.

One question this raises is whether Western cities might exhibit similar characteristics to, say, Shanghai if they, too,

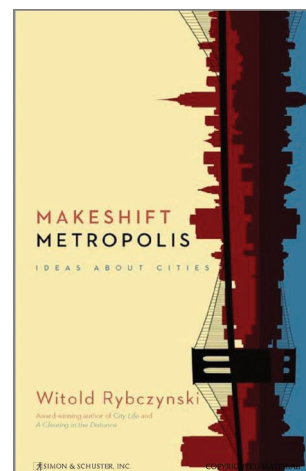
were experiencing double-digit growth. The flow of capital exerts more influence than has been previously credited. So while we exoticize urbanism in the "third world" as "chaotic," the same principles underlie our own slower growth patterns. Perhaps they are just not as uneasy with the inherent logic of cities.

Along these lines, how easy it is to forget the explosive growth of American cities in our not-too-distant past, especially in the late 19th and

early to mid-20th centuries. This is, after all, why concepts such as the Garden City came into existence in the first place—they were reactions. Cities were getting out of hand and people sought to rein them in before they supposedly fell apart. Enter the architects and planners with their grand solutions. But, as Rybczynski's narrative shows, insight into urban forces and how they might shape more effective planning strategies often comes from other quarters such

as economics. While we need designers to remind us of what could be, we also need the close reading of what is actually happening on the ground to inform these visions. With any luck, the continued exchange between the two can somehow materialize in real places people actually want...and *should* want.

LA-BASED GUY HORTON IS A FREQUENT CONTRIBUTOR TO ARCHITECTURAL RECORD, HUFFINGTON POST, AND ARCHDAILY.



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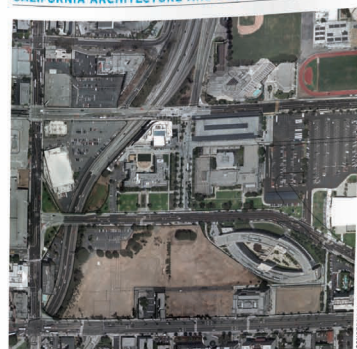
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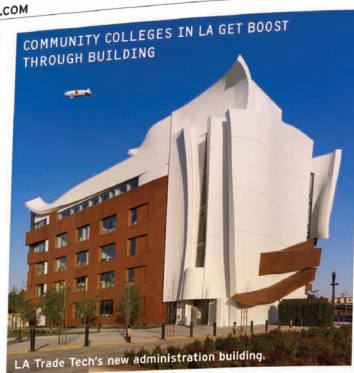
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FIELD OPERATIONS TO DESIGN MAJOR CIVIC PARK
IN SANTA MONICA

Notions of Green

James Corner and Field to design Santa Monica's new Palisades Garden Walk and Town Square. The high-profile Gehry Partners and Peter Walker, project will continued on page 5



ALL TOGETHER NOW

The opening of two new buildings at the Los Angeles Trade Technical College earlier this year marked the emergence of a thoroughly improved and enlarged campus in downtown LA. For 40 years, not a single new structure had been built at the first school in the 80-year-old Los Angeles Community College District. But the new Student Services/Administration Building and the Technology Classroom Building, continued on page 4



HOW THE RITZ AT L.A. LIVE STACKS UP.
SEE PAGE 6

CA'S GENERAL PLANS GET MORE PRESCRIPTIVE

SPECIFICALLY SPEAKING

In California, general plans define where growth should happen and what types of land use should be permitted in cities. But despite the "general" in their name, the plans are assuming an increasing amount of prescriptive detail, especially in terms of urban design. Cities like Los Angeles, Long Beach, Santa Monica, and Sacramento are taking continued on page 10



BOLD STATEMENT CHOSEN FOR NEWPORT BEACH CIVIC CENTER

SWEPT AWAY

CONTENTS

08 PRODUCT: STREETWISE
10 CA QUAKE SPECIALIST
12 HOT COFFEE DESIGN
17 HODGE ON MCQUEEN

03 CAVEAT
10 AT DEADLINE
16 SLAM
19 MARKETPLACE



BIG PLANS FOR SF'S PIER 70

SHIPPING NEWS

In April, the Port Commission of San Francisco will issue a request for qualifications to redevelop Pier 70, one of the city's last major pieces of waterfront. The plan for the 65-acre site south of Mission Bay is to restore its historic industrial shipyard, the oldest in continuous operation in the U.S. "Once upon a time, there were 30,000 workers here banging out ships," said David Baupre, the Port's senior waterfront planner. "We want to reactivate this area at that level." It's the second time in continued on page 3



"We were the only out-of-town firm on the shortlist, and we guessed that they might prefer something a bit more conservative, so we thought it was a long shot," said Greg Mottola, a principal in the continued on page 4

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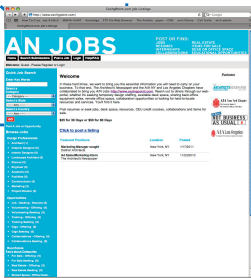
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COURTESY CREATIVE HOUSING ASSOCIATES

Thanks to his far-reaching reassessment of California's real estate industry, Michael Dieden is one of the state's more progressive developers. Dieden started his career as an aide on Jerry Brown's first successful gubernatorial campaign in 1974, and almost forty years later his work remains very much connected to the public realm. Dieden and his company, Creative Housing Associates (CHA), aim to improve neighborhoods through transit-oriented developments (TODs). The firm's Mission Meridian Village in South Pasadena – designed by Moule & Polyzoides Architects and Urbanists – is considered a model for revitalizing communities and integrating mass transit with architecture, and Dieden is currently pursuing a TOD in Santa Rosa, California. This fall Dieden chaired a panel at the Railvolution conference in Portland called "From Freeways to Boulevards," which focused on removing downtown freeways and replacing them with welcoming boulevards.

The Architect's Newspaper: You describe Creative Housing Associates as a "town builder" and not a developer.

Prior to World War II, most communities had a "town builder." That person didn't create the demand, he satisfied it, and building was financed by a local bank. Now with Wall Street financing, real estate is a commodity. You can see how that helped cause the economic collapse we're all suffering. The key is to "reset," as Richard Florida says in his recent book. The Millennial generation has no interest in the traditional notion of the single-family home. Their domicile is a shelter conceived in multi-family configurations, next to transit, not tied to autos, with social time spent out in cafés rather than inside large homes. We can't afford the Joel Kotkin model of living, as he describes the San Fernando Valley. Ironically, he lives in Studio City and The Valley has become quite densified and urbanized. It is much-improved by the Orange Line and Metro Rail. Now we just need to tear down the

101 freeway and allow the Valley to return to its bucolic history. I'm not being cavalier about transportation needs. I know we can't do things overnight: Trucks still have to move from city to city, for example. But they'll have to go around the more human-scaled neighborhoods.

Financing for these catalytic developments is very difficult. We can't borrow money from the banks, which are shell-shocked and require very onerous underwriting requirements. Our project in Santa Rosa received about \$4 million in federal stimulus funds and \$11 million in Proposition 1C state funds. Thank goodness for public financing and the Obama administration or this TOD would be dead.

How does this situation relate to the political and social environment?

The population is very frightened; you see that in polling data. People have lost faith in their government's ability to protect them. This comes up when you propose a TOD: People are very skeptical, in part because of all the problems the older generation foisted on them. At CHA, we establish trust first and then introduce what might be possible in terms of new buildings. For Mission Meridian Village, I spent the first two months walking door to door, asking neighbors what they wanted, and not telling them how great my ideas were. When it comes to issues of NIMBYism, there are good and bad approaches. The bad comes from developers who hire slick community-relations teams to game the system to jam the development approvals through. The better approach is the charrette, inviting the community to have a seat at the table, so they are empowered. It's a much more healthy process and outcome.

To what degree was the collapse of the sprawl housing market responsible for this recession?

China, because it is such a large depositor in America's banks, decided it needed to hedge its investments. It pushed Wall

Street to invent instruments to invest hundreds of billions more dollars. Wall Street came up with the subprime mortgages and other risky financial instruments. In order to satisfy the demand for the huge increase in mortgages, Wall Street then had to fund sprawl developers. That's largely why you saw such growth in places like Riverside, Vegas, and Phoenix. They had the money, sold the houses, packaged and sold the mortgages as securities. And this house of cards collapsed upon everyone including the homebuilding industry. Now look at the devastation to our culture and society. It's a vicious cycle of the merchant builders, Wall Street and freeway construction: They are all complicit in perpetuating the 1950s suburban American dream. One can only hope that the BP oil fiasco in the Gulf will be the final nail in the coffin.

You've long proposed turning freeways into boulevards, as was done with the Embarcadero in San Francisco. Why exactly do you advocate tearing down the arteries in America's downtowns?

Look at the positive impact that could come from demolishing the 10 Freeway in Los Angeles. It's important in a whole host of both symbolic and real socio/environmental ways. For one, the 10 has segregated LA for half a century, to the point where people say, "Oh, my God, you go south of the 10?" Two, this freeway saps street vitality from the major arterials – Venice, Washington, Pico and Olympic Boulevards. Let's reverse that by removing cars and starting from scratch with pedestrian-friendly principles, maybe even running a trolley down it. The arterials could become what Wilshire Boulevard was supposed to be: the grand boulevards of Los Angeles.

Architect Stefanos Polyzoides has described you as a "guerilla developer."

I don't necessarily endorse that term, but the idea is that the ideal developer, when engaging a new opportunity, blends

Left: Dieden's transit-oriented Mission Meridian Village in South Pasadena.

in with the indigenous population like a guerilla fighter. You take the time to understand them, to learn their neighborhood history, and to think about where you might take it in a modern application. Most real estate is product-driven, with one of handful of uses: condos, strip centers, or housing tracts. This is why almost all new development resembles pasteurized cheese. Instead, we need to return to the concept of building beauty. When you visit a historic community such as San Juan Capistrano, where I recently participated in an urban-design charrette, the setting can be absolutely magical. But usually, when you are in a mall today, there is discomfort. The difference that comes from building to the human scale is felt on a primal level. Buildings should be designed for the human, not the ego, and not simply for the use.

Describe your opposition to single-use, one-off projects, and your desire for transit-oriented districts.

When we're invited into a city, we look at it through a broader vision, where it's not just the site itself but what's surrounding it and what makes it cohesive. In a well-designed transit-oriented district, all the components are integrated, from street lighting to building heights with varied density. In a transformative process, the district assumes a sense of arrival. The train station is like the foyer to the community. It should offer a sense of excitement. From there you can go out a half-mile radius into a neighborhood where people can give up a car, where schools and open space are nearby. People will see we really don't need these freeways anymore, and they can live without having to own a car.

Sustainability has become a prime design consideration. Most architects now believe it's not good design if it's not sustainable design. But how real is the sustainability movement? If it's really about protecting people and the planet, shouldn't there be corollary for social justice? That is: It's not good design if it's not socially responsible design?

Much of the "green" fad really has nothing to do with significant sustainability. Sustainably has become a demand from the Millennials as well, but with a deeper dimension: To take the ego out of architecture and build practical, well-designed, human-scaled buildings. Their lifestyle is completely different from what sprawl product delivers. You will now see a socially responsible sustainability; one driven by real demand. People are living in smaller and more intimate spaces. My own family of three, plus dog, live in a 1,600-square-foot house.

Many developers are answering the call – especially in this down market – with affordable housing, some of which is quite good. You'll see more and more compact development, especially with new transit coming in. That's happening all over: It is the marriage of builders recognizing the demands of the millennials with their own sense of social responsibility.

AN INTERVIEWER JACK SKELLEY WRITES ABOUT URBAN DESIGN AND REAL ESTATE.

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